

Iron River Hatchery Highlights

U . S . F I S H & W I L D L I F E S E R V I C E

OPEN HOUSE

BY CAREY EDWARDS




Above: The Brule River Sportsman's Club sponsors and serves the free cook-out lunch. Below: Unique tee shirts line tank walls to dry.

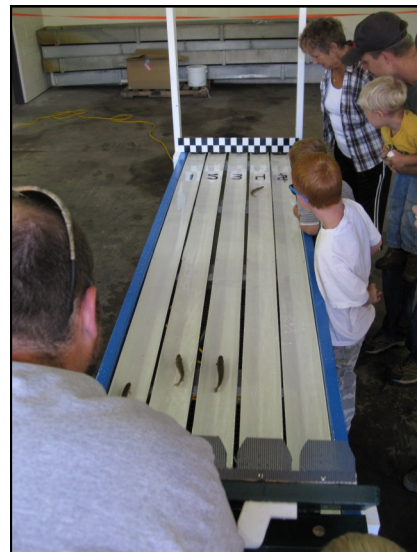


The Iron River National Fish Hatchery (IRNFH) hosted its 10th annual open house on September 15, 2012. Approximately 200 visitors toured the facility. Children were offered gift bags with personalized IRNFH goodies. Guided tours from knowledgeable hatchery staff awaited groups on the half hour. Two popular activities, again a hit this year, were the fish printing and casting games. Children were able to decorate in an array of colors for a one of a kind shirt with fish molds, paints and markers. Plastic lawn bass were spread out in the lawn for children to practice their casting skills and each child received a prize (donated by the Friends of the Iron River National Fish Hatchery) for catching the wily bass.

Back for the fourth year at IRNFH was the Wild Rivers Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU) with their fly tying booth. All materials used were donated by TU and children were able to take their homemade fly home. The Friends of the Iron River National Fish Hatchery also manned a booth and showcased sale items such as hats and tee shirts sporting the group logo. New for the Friends was a "minnow" racing station. This was a big sensation and generated more interest and questions about becoming a Friend. Making an appearance this year was Jordan River National Fish Hatchery and Bayfield County's Aquatic Invasive Species mascot, "Milfoil Man". Both had informational booths with personalized gifts.

After seeing the sites and participating in the days event, visitors could help themselves to a cook out lunch donated by the Brule River Sportsman's Club. Members cooked and served approximately 200 hot dogs to hungry guests. Capping off the end of the day was a trail dedication ceremony in honor of the Simpson family followed by a trail hike.

Partnerships are the cornerstone to any successful operation and the Iron River National Fish Hatchery is no exception. Thanks to these new collaborations, the hatchery was able to host a very successful event. Stay tuned to see what new events and collaborations take place next year. 




Above: The minnow racing event brought in spectators both young and young at heart to take a turn at racing a fish. Below: "Milfoil Man" from the Bayfield County AIS program poses by his informational booth.



BAYFIELD COUNTY FAIR

BY CAREY EDWARDS

The Bayfield County Fair has been a long standing event making its debut in September of 1894. This year's event was held from August 23-26th. Vendors, exhibitors and over 10,000 visitors from near and far packed into the generous fairgrounds for the four day extravaganza. The goal of the fair has always been to make a memorable educational experience for all ages.

For over ten years, the Iron River National Fish Hatchery (IRNFH) has participated in the Bayfield County Fair. Staff set up a booth in the 4H Exhibit Hall with brochures, pictures, and fish mounts. Also on display was the Hatchery's big fish distribution truck, which was garnished with flyers and signs promoting our Open House. This event is a great way to reach a large crowd with the hatchery's mission and the staff looks forward to participating again next year. 



Iron River National Fish Hatchery's booth at the Bayfield County Fair.

SPAWNING SEASON BEGINS

BY CAREY EDWARDS

Iron River National Fish Hatchery spawns thousands of lake trout and coaster brook trout each year. Eggs collected from these fish are used for restoration purposes in the upper Great Lakes. The spawning season began on August 28, 2012 with the Klondike Reef strain of lake trout. Hatchery staff collected over 1.4 million lake trout eggs in a five week period.

Look for Siskiwit Harbor strain of coaster brook trout to begin spawning in October and Tobin Harbor strain of brook trout in November. Fish are sorted for sexual maturity on Thursdays and eggs are collected every Tuesday. Approximately 5 million eggs are expected to be produced for Iron River's needs as well as for outside agencies including Grand Portage Indian

Conservation, Keweenaw Bay Indian Conservation, Jordan River National Fish Hatchery, Genoa National Fish Hatchery, Allegheny National Fish Hatchery and United States Geological Survey. Thanks to all the volunteers that help make our spawning season a success!



Above: Lake trout eggs are harvested for fertilization. Eggs are shipped to other entities as well as incubated at Iron River.

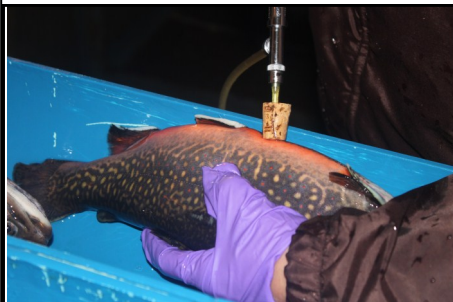


VACCINATIONS COMPLETE BY CAREY EDWARDS

Furunculosis (pronounced fur-unc-you-low-sis) is a bacterial disease primarily found in cultured salmonid and warm water species. It is found widespread in natural waters. Diseased fish appear lethargic, go off feed and display clinical signs such as exophthal-

mia (bulging eyes), hemorrhagic fins, and furuncles (open boil-like sores). The pathogen is usually transmitted as the result of contact with diseased or carrier fish but can also occur via water passed from one contaminated water supply to another (tank to tank). Fish may be carriers of the disease without showing any clinical signs, which is why hatchery fish are biannually tested by the La Crosse Fish Health Lab. In 2011, for the first time in over 25 years of fish culture at Iron River National Fish Hatchery (NFI), furunculosis was diagnosed. The disease positive classification impacts the U.S. Fish & Wildlife's ability to meet stocking goals with its many partners including state and tribal agencies because some states have regulations regarding the transport of eggs and fish from positive facilities. A priority for IRNFI has been to achieve a disease free status for three consecutive years to lift the disease positive classification.

The process began with destroying all positively diagnosed lots of fish, continuing best hatchery management practices and vaccinating all remaining and future brood fish against furunculosis. Small brood fish (approximately 2g in weight) are immersed in a dip while larger brood fish receive an injectable version of the vaccine. This is the second year that the vaccine has been implemented with adults being injected in late June and the final immersion of juveniles in early September. It is hoped that the early vaccination process will be part of a successful biosecurity plan at the Iron River NFI which will lay the framework towards attaining a disease free status.



Above: A Coaster brook trout is injected with a vaccine to protect against furunculosis.

FIN CLIPPING AT GENOA NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY BY CAREY EDWARDS

Would you like to receive your newsletter via email? Contact Carey_Edwards@fws.gov.



For many years, the experienced fin-clippers from Iron River National Fish Hatchery (IRNFI) have been assisting Genoa National Fish Hatchery (GNFI) with clipping brook trout destined for tributaries to Lake Superior on the Grand Portage Reservation. On August 20-22nd, three veteran fin-clippers and animal caretaker Katie Jardine headed down to Genoa to clip 11,000 coaster brook trout. The brook trout originated from IRNFI as eyed-eggs and were transferred to GNFI in February where they will be reared until April 2013 and stocked as yearlings. The brook trout received a right ventral clip. Fin-clipping is a management tool used so biologists can tell the difference between a native and hatchery fish when doing population assessments. Future brood stock are also reared at GNFI for Iron River and the crew clipped an additional 2,000 Tobin Harbor strain coaster brook trout. These fish will be

held at Genoa until late fall and then transferred back to IRNFI to join the ranks of the other brood fish on hand. Optimally, eggs from brood lots are split in half, one group kept in Iron River and the other sent to Genoa. Should a problem arise with the eggs at Iron River, a back-up group is on hand at Genoa. This avoids keeping all of our eggs in one basket, so to speak. Progeny from these brood fish will reach Genoa in two years to continue the cycle.



Sandy Lind gathers equipment for fin clipping at Genoa NFI.



Duane relates memories of growing up on a homestead overlooking the springs in the middle of the woods in northern Wisconsin.

SIMPSON TRAIL

BY CAREY EDWARDS

The location of the Iron River National Fish Hatchery (IRNFH) was chosen on Schacte Creek because of its crystal clear, cold and unwavering flow and its proximity to western Lake Superior which was in desperate need of lake trout restoration. The hatchery began to take shape in the late 1970's with the acquisition of approximately 800 acres from multiple landowners.

Raceways and buildings were added in the early 1980's and the hatchery was off and running with an annual production of a little over one million lake trout. Additional land was purchased to encompass and protect the headwaters, bringing the current acreage up to 1200. Since the hatchery's inception, the land has of course changed in appearance with buildings, hatchery residences, water intake structures and service roads. A not well known change is the addition of a three mile trail system that can be accessed anytime of the year. There are two loops; red and blue, with trailheads located in the hatchery parking lot and on Weidenhaar Road. The trails are maintained all year long and can be used for just about anything done on foot, including hunting, hiking, snowshoeing and cross country skiing. As fate would have it, Duane Simpson, a member of one of the families that contributed 360 acres to the original land mass, came to

work at the IRNFH by way of the Experience Works Program. Duane worked at the facility for seven years performing janitorial duties and carpentry work. He told stories about skiing to the bus stop as a kid, in the snow, uphill, both ways and the stories were actually real. Over the years, he shared other memories about growing up on a homestead overlooking the springs in the middle of the woods in northern Wisconsin.

This past fall, the IRNFH held a trail dedication to honor the Simpson family during the annual open house. Members of the Simpson family were invited to attend a brief ceremony at the trailhead followed by a guided hike to the remnants of the Simpson homestead located on the red loop. Duane's carpentry skills can be viewed in the way of informational kiosks located at both trailheads.

The hatchery in itself is a great destination to learn about the life cycle of trout, see big fish and learn about the Fish and Wildlife Service's mission but it also a wonderful destination for families and individuals to enjoy a beautiful piece of land. Whether you like to hunt, bird watch, pick mushrooms or cross country ski, the Iron River National Fish Hatchery has something to offer everyone.



Members of the Simpson family pose for a picture before heading out for a hike to the homestead site.



Above Kyle and Brianna worked side by side with hatchery staff to install the new entry sign. Below: Brianna and Kyle mix cement for posts that hold the hatchery's new informational kiosks, which can be found at both trail heads.



YCC PROGRAM COMES TO A CLOSE

BY CAREY EDWARDS

The Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) is a summer employment program for young men and women aged 15 through 18 that allow America's youth to further the development and maintenance of the natural resource on federally managed lands. The program is 8-10 weeks in duration and is available to any appropriately aged youth regardless of social, economic, ethnic, racial and disabled status. Members are selected in a random method. YCC was authorized in 1970 and opportunities for employment are found within the National Park Service, US Forest Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. YCC members are provided the opportunity to increase self-esteem, learn self-discipline and work ethics, relate with peers and supervisors and develop knowledge and understanding of the nation's natural environment and heritage. It also prepares them

for the responsibility of maintaining and managing these resources for the American people. Kyle Pederson and Brianna Starzl were this year's YCC participants at the Iron River National Fish Hatchery. They were given a wide spectrum of tasks from natural resource management to hand labor projects as well as the opportunity to work with other agencies. They were instrumental in installing posts and kiosks for environmental education, maintaining hatchery grounds and trails and participating in fish culture.

In the spring, all interested and qualifying applicants should submit an application to the Iron River National Fish Hatchery. Applications can be picked up at the hatchery or downloaded at http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ycc/ycc_appl.pdf. We hope to see your application next spring!





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TO:

STAFF UPDATES



Staff photo: From left to right: biologist Nick Grueneis, biologist Carey Edwards, administrative technician Laurie Gucinski, YCC Brianna Starzl, Assistant manager Nick Starzl, YCC Kyle Pederson, biologist Shawn Sanders, Hatchery manager Dale Bast.



(Abernathie FTC and Saratoga NFH.) In Paul's spare time, he enjoys playing his guitar, reading and fishing.

Welcome Paul Larson! Paul joined the staff at Iron River as a fish biologist in late September. Paul hails from St. Maries, Idaho and is the oldest of two children. His past 17 years of experience in fisheries has included the state of Oregon, the US Forest Service and US Fish Wildlife Service



Calendar of Events:

October: Mass marking is complete
 November: Fall Fingerling stocking
 December: Spawning is complete

FRIEND'S GROUP



From left to right: Friend's of the Iron River National Fish Hatchery participants during the open house: Mr. Harwood, Natalie Harwood and son Daniel, Merlyn Coy, Larry Fickbom and Karen Roebken.

The Friend's of the Iron River National Fish Hatchery participated in the Open House by manning an informative booth and the first annual minnow racing game. The group was able to procure windows for the warming hut and is still working on locating doors. The annual meeting will be conducted in December. Meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Iron River Hatchery. Everyone is welcome.

Membership information can be found at the Friend's website: <http://ironriverhatcheryfriends.org>, by emailing the Friends at something-fishy@ironriverhatcheryfriends.org or by contacting the hatchery office via the information below.

